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Applicant

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FROM: Michael Garabedian, President  
Friends of the North Fork  
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RE: Aesthetic and recreational matters

DATE: December 11, 2013

PAGES: Cover sheet plus 2



## FRIENDS OF THE NORTH FORK

7143 Gardenvine Avenue  
Citrus Heights, California 95621

December 9, 2013

Miner (Mickey) Gray, Chairman  
Larry Sevison, Vice Chairman  
Ken Denio, Secretary  
Richard Johnson  
Jeffrey Moss  
Wayne Nader  
Richard Roccucci  
Placer County Planning Commission  
3091 County Center Drive  
Auburn, California 95603

Re: Belcara Subdivision Visual and Recreation impacts  
December 12, 2013, Commission agenda.

Dear Commissioners:

The Placer County Planned Development Code encourages innovation in residential development that will, "...Significantly increase the opportunities for the public to enjoy trails and recreational facilities." County Code 17.54.080(A)(3). "...Conservation of visual and aesthetic resources "is a purpose" of PD. County Code 17.54.080(A). PD findings must address the manner in which the design does or does not make adequate provision for... the amenities of light and air, recreation and visual enjoyment." County Code 17.54.090(B)(5).

Design and layout must be compatible with adjacent land uses. County Code 17.54.080(A)(2); 17.54.100(A)(1)(d) and (A)(2)(c). PD findings must address the beneficial or adverse relationship of the project to its neighborhood. County Code 17.54.090(B)(6).

The Foresthill Divide is the heart of the Auburn State Recreational Area. ASRA is the only recreational area close to a major metropolitan area that provides vast remote and near-wilderness recreation opportunities on land and water. There are stunning vistas for sightseeing throughout the ASRA and the territory surrounding it.

The "Belcara: Visibility From I-80," Attachment H to the staff report (Page 123, the report's last page) shows that the proposed subdivision and its sister public



lands highlands area adjoining it to the south are the most visible areas on the Divide from I-80. The Belcara ridge from mid-subdivision to south of the project approaches the visibility of areas in the foreground and near ground of I-80 freeway itself. This is the area where there is no buffer proposed in the subdivision between the lots and the immediately adjacent public highlands. Belcara is the project proposal next to Monte Verde, and the I-80 visibility map shows that Monte Verde is not visible from the freeway.

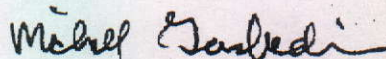
Belcara is indeed a beacon, an iconic beacon inconsistent with the area's recreational resources and the Foresthill Divide's human and cultural identity; a sore thumb of visibility. PD here is the one opportunity to do something about it.

All four MND aesthetics items (3rd MND page 5-8) are of potentially significant impact. Vegetation cover is not reliable, and this is especially true not only after a fire.

The project and its MND fail to conduct an analysis of project visibility from most ASRA trails in the North Fork, in the Middle fork, and on the Divide. Belcara would be highly visible from many areas along the Long Point Fuel Break Trail. Most of the ASRA trails from which Belcara is potentially visible have not been subjected to visual impact analysis. See ASRA Topographic Trail Map published by Sowarwe-Werher that is popularly known as the PARC map. Visual analysis should be done individually for key trails including the trails on which competitions are held.

The project map does not show the existing Long Point Fuel Break Trail where it presently turns at the eastern most point of 20-acre Parcel B to go along the ridge through 20-acre Parcel B. There is no showing on the project map of the Long Point Trail turning to the boundary of Parcel B at its location near the eastern most point. Instead, the project map shows a fork turning to Parcel B near the southern end of Parcel B. And in this manner, the project owner who is also the owner of Parcel B is making plans after all for Parcel B as part of Belcara. Belcara slates Parcel B for a trail entry but does not deal with other development, and does not address the visibility of Parcel B.

Sincerely,



Michael Garabedian, President